S 648 L 648 ne peut être en opposition avec les obligations contractées par la France en ce qui concerne la Syrie, particulièrement envers la Société des Nations. Cette réserve s'applique spécialement aux articles qui touchent au maintien de l'ordre, de la sécurité et de la défense du pays, et à ceux qui intéressent les relations extérieures. Pendant la durée des obligations internationales de la France, en ce qui concerne la Syrie, les dispositions de la présente Constitution qui seraient de nature à les affecter ne seront pas applicables que dans les conditions déterminées par accord à intervenir entre les gouvernements français et syrien. En conséquence, les lois prévues par les articles de la présente Constitution dont l'application pourrait intéresser ses responsabilités ne seront discutées et promulguées conformément à la présente Constitution qu'en exécution de cet accord. Les décisions d'ordre législatif et réglementaire prises par les représentants du gouvernement français ne pourront être modifiées qu'après entente entre les deux gouvernements.'

Secondly, there were a number of important administrative services which were wholly removed from the control of the Syrian and Lebanese Governments and placed under direct supervision of the Delegate-General, who administered them through a staff which was largely French in the upper ranks, but Syrian and Lebanese in the lower. They included:

S L 652 648 i. The 'Common Interests', a number of departments dealing with matters of concern to both Syria and Lebanon. The most important of them were the customs administration, the control of concessionary companies and certain economic, financial and social services. They were financed out of the 'Funds of Common Interest', consisting almost entirely of customs receipts, which were sufficient not only to pay for these services but to provide a large surplus which was in principle divided between the two Governments.

S L 648 701 ii. The 'Troupes Spéciales', the local Syrian and Lebanese levies. Some thousands strong, they had been in existence throughout the Mandatory period as an integral part of the French Army of the Levant, and until the outbreak of war they had been wholly paid for out of the 'Funds of Common Interest'. They now formed part of the French territorial command.

000 iii. The 'Sûreté Générale', the organization responsible for

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that the Syro-Lebanese currency would once more share in the precarious fortunes of the franc; and its reserves would be under the control of the French Government, which might be tempted to use this control in order to strike a hard political or financial bargain.

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It has already been mentioned that by the end of 1944 all important services administered by the Delegation-General had been transferred to the Syrian and Lebanese Governments, with the exception of the 'Troupes Spéciales'. These troops, whose numbers had been considerably augmented since the allied occupation in 1941, and who now formed a reasonably well-disciplined and well-armed force of several thousands, were under the French territorial command. Throughout the year the two Governments pressed for their formal transfer, while making it clear that for the duration of the war they would, of course, remain at the disposal of the Allied Command. The French Government was unwilling to transfer them until the end of the war, or at least until a later stage in it, and was not prepared to give them up unconditionally but only in exchange for the conclusion of treaties of alliance with France by the Syrian and Lebanese Governments; the possession of the 'Troupes' was, in fact, their only direct bargaining-counter in their attempt to persuade the two Governments to sign such treaties.

The Syrian and Lebanese Governments for their part did not admit that the question of the 'Troupes' had anything to do with the question of the treaties. In their eyes the transfer of the 'Troupes' was a logical consequence of promises and declarations already made by the French: General Catroux, in his declarations of Syrian and Lebanese independence in 1941, had stated that the two States were at liberty to raise national armies. Moreover, the transfer of the 'Troupes Spéciales' was a necessary preliminary to any negotiations for a treaty; such negotiations could only take place on a footing of complete equality, and equality could not exist so long as the Syrian and Lebanese Governments did not possess armed forces and so long as the French held over their heads the threat of refusal to transfer the 'Troupes'.

In addition to insisting on their right to control the

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'Troupes,' the two Governments emphasised their need for them. The experience of 1936-1939 had shown what a mockery was self-government so long as the Government had not sufficient forces at its disposal to assert its will. No Government could expect obedience and respect so long as it was not able to curb the pretensions of the overmighty subject; this was particularly true of a country like Syria, where semi-feudal tenures were still to be found, localism was so strong a force, and there existed large Beduin tribes traditionally recalcitrant to civil government and having had full opportunity to arm themselves during the war. Local disorders had already taken place among the Beduin in the Jazirah and in the area dominated by Sulaiman Murshid. It was impossible to rely entirely upon French-controlled forces to prevent disorder, since that would be to admit that France was still the real power in the country and the Government only a façade; loyalty and obedience would only be given where real authority lay.

There was another reason for the attitude of the Syrian Government. They remembered that in 1920 the French had occupied Damascus and overturned the national Government by force; and that in 1925 the national revolt had been suppressed with the help of local levies drawn from the Circassian and other minorities. They were afraid that at some time in the future the French Government might be tempted to repeat its action and to restore its authority in Damascus with the help of the 'Troupes Spéciales', who included a large number of Circassians, Kurds and other minorities organized in separate units. Since the 'Troupes' were the only considerable armed force under French command in the Levant, their transfer to the local Governments would remove this weapon from the hands of the French.

For all these reasons the Syrian and Lebanese Governments demanded the immediate and unconditional transfer of the 'Troupes Spéciales', or else, if this were refused, their disbandment. Otherwise they would proceed with the formation of national armies. Both Governments made special appropriations for this purpose in their 1944 and 1945 budgets.

With this fundamental difference of opinion between the French point of view and that of the Syrians and Lebanese, it is not surprising that when discussions on the subject opened in the early months of 1944 they led to little result. A draft

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agreement was, it is true, reached between the Syrian Government and the Delegate-General, General Beynet, but negotiations were then broken off by the French Committee in Algiers. With Lebanon a limited agreement was reached; in June it was arranged that a battalion wholly officered by Lebanese would be placed at the disposal of the Lebanese Government pending the conclusion of a general agreement. By the end of the year no further progress had been made, and the new year opened with demonstrations in Damascus in favour of the formation of an army and against what was believed to be the too indulgent attitude of the Government towards French delays.

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A still more fundamental question, that of the conclusion of Franco-Syrian and Franco-Lebanese Treaties, became urgent during 1944.

The French Government claimed that, in spite of the declarations of independence made in 1941 and the subsequent transfer of powers, legally the Mandate still remained in force and would remain until a restored League of Nations or another international authority should bring it to an end; as in the case of Iraq, a necessary preliminary to its being brought to an end was the conclusion of treaties of alliance and friendship with the Mandatory Power. They pointed out that the declarations of independence had referred to the negotiation of such treaties, and even claimed that independence had not been granted unconditionally but only on condition that the Syrian and Lebanese Governments entered into treaties with France. They referred further to Great Britain's recognition of France's pre-eminent and privileged position in the Levant, and maintained that treaties were necessary in order to define and safeguard her position.

France's insistence on the signature of treaties had several motives. There was first her desire to preserve her political, economic and other interests in the Levant States themselves. Again, there was the fear that a withdrawal from the Levant would lower her prestige in North Africa and encourage the demands of the nationalists there. Moreover, so long as Metropolitan France was not liberated, the Fighting French were naturally reluctant to give up a particle of their position anywhere in the world where they still retained it. The

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Europe and with the United States; but Lebanon has not moved out of step with the Muslim states around her, and she has followed the Arab League line over Palestine and in Egypt's quarrel with Britain and has not agreed to join a Middle East defence organization. She has, however, received arms and military training from Britain and has gladly accepted Point Four aid from the United States.

The main issue of external policy which exercises the Lebanese is the extent of the country's co-operation with Syria and the other Arab states. Some Christians advocate withdrawing the frontiers of the Republic to those of the old Sanjaq of Lebanon together with Beirut; some Muslims want Lebanon to reunite with Syria, and between these extremes discussion still continues. The disagreement with Syria is economic rather than political, but it might gain political significance if Lebanon were to feel isolated to the point at which she felt compelled to come to terms with Israel. At the moment, this is unlikely because Lebanon's friendship with the NATO Powers is good security against possible incursions of enemies or friends.

Armed Forces[1]

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Syria has compulsory military service of eighteen months and, since Shishakli's advent, the draft net is being cast over many who previously escaped. The armed services consume each year a growing share of the budget—in 1951–2 they took 40 per cent of the total—and in 1952 there were compulsory collections for the army. The army is grouped in five brigades, each of rather less than 10,000 men, and has tanks, armoured cars, and light, medium, and anti-aircraft artillery and searchlights. Much of the equipment came from France and, though the best then obtainable, is of doubtful serviceableness. However, Colonel Shishakli is determined to give the army good equipment, and a factory for minor armaments exists near Damascus. German instructors are used by the army and air force and are helping to produce light armaments. The air force is part of the army; jet aircraft have been received from Britain and the air force still operates two Dakotas taken over from Syrian airways. The armed gendarmerie had its own esprit and fought well in Palestine; it is now under army control as are the police and the force used for bedouin control.

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The Lebanese army is about a brigade strong and includes a regiment of chasseurs-ski troops. Lebanese officers have had instruction with the British Army and there is an RAF mission with the Lebanese air force who are using jet trainers.

[1] In the following sections the two countries are considered together.